Struggle for Survival - Aspects of Cypriot Political History after 1974
[Αγώνας για Επιβίωση – Πτυχές της Κυπριακής Πολιτικής Ιστορίας μετά το 1974]

The Turkish invasion of Cyprus, in the summer of 1974, undoubtedly constitutes a milestone in the evolution of not only the unresolved Cyprus issue, but also in the institutions of the established Republic of Cyprus, whose government found itself cut off from 34% of its territory.

Time has not stood still since the summer of 1974. Life has gone on and the Republic of Cyprus was called upon to adapt to the new realities. As everyday life on the island was changing, it was only natural that the state institutions would evolve, adjusting to the fact that the legitimate Cypriot government was no longer able to control its entire state territory. In the spring of 2003, the reopening of the previously barricaded Ledras Street checkpoint, an event independent of any permanent political solution, explicitly represents the current phase of transition that the island has been experiencing, albeit with an unknown future. The ongoing areas of contention for the Cypriot government include the aftermath of the Turkish occupation and the negotiations aiming to reunify the island.

'Struggle for Survival - Aspects of Cypriot Political History after 1974' is a collection of 15 original scientific essays, presented by 19 academic researchers in a conference on contemporary political history of the Republic of Cyprus, which took place in October 2018, at the University of Nicosia. The contributors present a number of rationales, reviewing and recording the way in which the post-1974 semi-occupied Republic of Cyprus has described and perceived itself, while being aware of the temporary nature of the current status quo, and negotiating the answer to the critical *quo vadis* question.

The Greek Cypriot interpretation of the course of negotiations for a solution to the Cyprus problem and the various effects of the ongoing Turkish occupation are described in the first nine chapters of the book. It is portrayed from the perspective of

Nicosia, and how it judges the Athens attitude regarding the national problem. The course of Cypriot institutional integration into the European Union is also examined, as well as how the ideological agenda of Cypriot foreign policy is affected by the path of the island's colonial past.

The remaining six chapters discuss particular aspects of the evolution of the society and its institutions, including the attitude of the mass media during the financial crisis of 2013, the formation of centrist political parties and the dialectic between politics and literature.

Chapters 1-9: The Republic of Cyprus in the Shadow of Occupation

Petros Papapolyviou analyses the evolution of party affiliations and emphasises the discrepancies in the historical narrative dealing with the post-occupation reality, from the 1970s up to the present day.

Andreas Theofanous clearly describes the Greek Cypriot pluralism of concepts over the definition of the 'bicommunal bizonal federation', which has been promoted by the international community as the constitutional model for the solution of the conflict. In addition to the agenda of the negotiations, Theofanous highlights, not only the criteria that led to the rejection of the Annan Plan, but also the anticipated constructive role that the European Union could secure.

Sotiris Rizas, by pointing out the similarities and differences between the Nimetz plan (1978) and the proposals of de Cuellar (1984-86), describes the Greek Cypriot concerns as to 'what would be the correct content' of the island's federalisation –a question that has been pondered on by all Cypriot governments, without exception, from 1974 onwards.

Andreas Stergiou evaluates the possibility of a federal solution to the problem, while pointing out that a possible 'two-state solution' should not be regarded as anathema. Also of interest are the remarks by Georgios Angeletopoulos, presenting a critical overview of the Turkish media coverage of the negotiations leading to the Annan Plan and the results of the double referendum which took place on 24 April 2004 in both sides of the divide.

Given the realities of the ongoing *status quo* of 'non-solution', Michalis Kontos and Andreas Karyos revisit the role of Greece and Turkey, the two 'Mother Countries' of the Cyprus conflict, by presenting a critical evaluation of the management of the S-300 missile crisis during 1997-98. The decision not to install this particular defense system in the territories controlled by the Cypriot government, as a consequence of Athens' decision to back down at Ankara's insistence, caused disappointment in Nic-

osia -a fact that left its own distinctive mark on the relations between Cyprus and Greece from 1974 onwards.

Another interesting aspect examined in the book is the remarkably fast and smooth institutional integration of the Republic of Cyprus, in order to adapt to the terms and conditions set by the European Union. As Christina Ioannou very aptly observes, the accession of Cyprus to the EU was perceived by the political leadership, as well as by Greek Cypriot society, as a 'national goal' and a common 'national effort', taking on the character of a nation-building process through the Europeanisation of the independent Cypriot State.

The ideological basis of the legal opinions prepared by the Republic of Cyprus in the framework of the International Court of Justice in the Hague, when the latter was called upon to rule on the status of Kosovo and the Chagos Archipelago in Mauritius, is demonstrated in the article by Nikolas A. Ioannidis. Emphasising the anti-colonial views of the Republic of Cyprus' foreign policy, Ioannidis recalls that the demand for decolonisation is still relevant, since the insignia of the British Sovereign Bases yet remain from the 'pragmatic' London-Zurich Agreements.

Concluding the presentation of the impact of the 1974 Turkish invasion on Cypriot reality, 'Struggle for Survival' examines the issue of missing persons. Due to the passage of time, Mary Antoniou and Emilios A. Solomou soberly explain the choices and criteria of the Cypriot governments over the last 50 years, which co-shaped the modern post-occupation Greek Cypriot narrative.

Chapters 10-15: Society and Institutions

Following the 1974 invasion and the admission of Cyprus to the EU in 2004, the third milestone in the history of the young Cypriot State was the economic crisis of 2013. Sofia Iordanidou, Emmanuel Takas and Kyriakos Kolovos examine how the economic crisis affected the credibility of the Greek Cypriot media. Using comparative examples, they conclude that the local media outlets, either out of necessity or by choice, showed tolerance to government decisions, which, in some cases, served as a bulwark against social reactions, trying to convince the audiences of the necessity for taking harsh emergency measures. Interestingly enough, this was in contrast to what had occurred in Greece and in some other European countries when faced with similar economic challenges.

Vassilis Protopapas examines the formation and consolidation of a new political pole in the post-invasion Cypriot political system, focusing on the emergence of two major centrist parties, the Democratic Party (DIKO) and the socialist EDEK, which

have both withstood the electoral contests since the 1970s. By comparing their ideological origins in relation to the two main poles of the local political system (the right-wing Democratic Rally - DISY and the left-wing AKEL), Protopapas presents, succinctly and comprehensibly, the pool of 'centrist' votes in Greek Cypriot society and the post-1974 electoral behavior, within a multi-party environment, which was actually consolidated only after 1977, following the death of Archbishop Makarios, the influential first President.

The last four chapters creatively connect politics with literature. Firstly, Ioanna Alexandrou, highlighting the intellectual work of the first female Greek Cypriot MP, Rina Katselli, emphasises the presence of women, both in State institutions and within society. Secondly, using their literary talent as point of reference, Dimitris P. Sotiropoulos sketches the personalities of three diplomats, Nikos Kranidiotis, Rodis Roufos-Kanakaris and Giorgos Seferis, by demonstrating their influence in the shaping of contemporary Cypriot history at crucial times and specific places. Thirdly, Achilles C. Emilianides, prompted by the Athenian playwright Dimitris Psathas' political satire contributions in the Greek press in the turbulent years of 1974-75, graphically states how attached (and yet how detached, too) Greek public opinion was from the post-invasion Cypriot trajectory. Finally, Marilena Neokleous collects Cypriot literary texts that describe the emotions of those Greek Cypriots who visited their ancestral homes in the occupied north, after the reopening of the checkpoints, in the spring of 2003, giving the reader the opportunity to get to guess if and when yet another wound caused by the Cypriot tragedy, could ever be healed.

As a final comment to make; the added value of this book, published in 2021 by the quarterly review *'Nea Estia'*, Hippasus law publications and the University of Nicosia, lies in the fact that the narrative of the past takes a backseat, as academic researchers build new bridges between the past and the present, in contrast to the vast majority of Cypriot and international bibliography focusing solely on the past. The 'Struggle for Survival' describes in what way the Republic of Cyprus perceives and narrates itself during an ongoing *de facto* transitional period, which began in the summer of 1974, continued with the opening of the checkpoints in the spring of 2003, and since then, continues with no indication of a political breakthrough. This collective work postulates a multidisciplinary description of current Cypriot realities, providing opportunities for further reflection. In this sense, *'Struggle for Survival - Aspects of Cypriot Political History after 1974'* is an original, self-perceived autobiographical monologue of a semi-occupied European country, presented in a collec-

tive academic work, fulfilling the criteria of a reliable historical source, useful to the researcher in Cyprus and abroad.

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